



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Report on the impracticability of thoroughly disinfecting vessels at Tampico and other Mexican ports.

[The attention of quarantine officers, both at foreign and domestic ports, is called to the following report from Tampico, and especially to that portion of it which relates to the engine rooms and stokeholes of steamers at an infected port and the liability of mosquitoes making these portions of the vessel harbors of refuge:]

TAMPICO, MEXICO, *August 19, 1903.*

SIR: In accordance with instructions contained in Bureau letter of the 31st ultimo, I have the honor to submit the following report:

The city of Tampico is situated on the left bank of the Rio Panuco, about 6 nautical miles from its mouth, and has an estimated population of 17,000. About 3 miles below Tampico, on the same bank of the river, is the town, or settlement, of Doña Cecilia, where the coal docks of the Mexican Central Railway are located, and where the steamers of the Pensacola-Tampico trade are discharged. At the mouth of the Panuco is the small village of La Barra. The hospital of the Mexican Central Railway is located here.

Tampico is surrounded on every side by lagoons and marshes, and these, in conjunction with the rain-water barrels and open cisterns which abound in the city, furnish unequaled breeding places for the mosquito.

Doña Cecilia, which is incorporated with Tampico, as is also La Barra, is almost entirely a settlement of railway employees and dock laborers. These are, or rather were before the epidemic, largely nonimmunes. The dock laborers at present, however, are almost entirely negroes from the British West Indies, the peons who formerly did much of this work having fled from the fever. It is claimed by the physicians here that these negroes are all immune. Dr. Carri-gan, surgeon in charge of the railway hospital at La Barra, states that he has never seen a case among them. Dr. Lippincott makes the same assertion.

Tampico and Doña Cecilia are undoubtedly badly infected places. I am informed by physicians who practice here that there is no part of either place in which cases of fever have not originated and are not originating.

At La Barra, however, only a few cases have developed, probably because the strong sea breeze which blows almost constantly keeps the mosquitoes down. The few nonimmune Americans who have thus far escaped the fever have done so by sleeping at La Barra.

The surrounding country, both on the railroad and water routes inland, has had, I am informed, many deaths from yellow fever among persons who have come down to Tampico, sickened there, and started back to their homes. It is said that canoes with natives in them dead or dying of the fever have been found in several instances up the river.

The percentage of deaths, if all cases are reported, is very high. Dr. Matienzo, the physician in charge of the civil hospital, states that it has been over 50 per cent in hospital practice. At the Mexican Central Hospital the results have been better—94 cases, with 36 deaths, since May 18.

Most of the reported cases occurring in Tampico have been sent to

the civil hospital, where they are put into screened wards. However, in some cases the patient is allowed to remain at his home, in which event a kind of mosquito house with double doors is erected around the sick bed. There have undoubtedly been many unreported and untreated cases.

The stegomyia is ubiquitous. There is now sitting in Tampico a medical commission sent by the Mexican National Government to investigate and report upon the conditions there. Dr. Del Rio, of this Federal commission, informed me this morning that the town of Victoria, about 250 kilometers north of Tampico on the line of the Monterey and Mexican Gulf Railway, was infected from Tampico, and there had been at the time of his visit last week 5 cases and 1 death.

Since the storm of the 15th instant telegraphic and rail facilities have been interrupted, and there are no recent reports from the interior.

The disinfection of vessels under the supervision of service officers here has been done entirely in the Panuco River at points marked by red anchors on the accompanying chart. As will be seen by reference to the chart, the river is nowhere much over a third of a mile wide, and I believe it is absolutely impossible to do a satisfactory disinfection at any point in the river, because of the great probability of mosquito contamination of the vessel while or immediately after disinfecting. There are undoubtedly days when, on account of the strong sea breeze, it would be possible to disinfect with safety near the land end of the stone jetty at the mouth of the river, but as the disinfected vessel, if of any size, would have to go up the river again, at least above Doña Cecilia, in order to turn around, she would probably receive a fresh influx of mosquitoes. In fair weather it might be possible to do the disinfection a few miles outside of the mouth of the river without danger of mosquito contamination, but there are, especially at this time of the year, many days when this would not be practicable.

There is, however, a point of extreme importance in this matter of disinfection at infected ports of departure, and that is the possibility of engine and fire rooms harboring infected mosquitoes. I have talked with engineers of steamers on this matter, and they inform me, without exception, that mosquitoes are as bad in the stokeholes and engine rooms when in port as in any other part of their ships, but that after a vessel has been out a day or so the mosquitoes leave these parts. I have not as yet been able to catch any mosquitoes in these compartments of the vessels here that I have visited, but one of the engineers of the steamer *August Belmont* told me that he had the morning of my visit been bitten by several mosquitoes while working in the stoke-hole about the boilers.

It would seem that to be effective, fumigation here should comprise the simultaneous treatment of all parts of a vessel, including fire and engine rooms, at some point outside of the seaward end of the jetty. I do not believe, however, that this is feasible. There would be some danger to the safety of a vessel in anchoring in an open roadstead and closing up the engine rooms for at least two hours.

It is therefore my opinion, in view of the widespread character and severity of the epidemic in Tampico and vicinity, the great prevalence of mosquitoes, and the impossibility of disinfecting without danger of mosquito infection during or after the process, that it is impracticable to do an absolutely safe disinfection of outward bound vessels at the

port of Tampico at this time, and I would respectfully recommend that the unmodified quarantine regulations be enforced at all Gulf ports against vessels from Tampico.

Respectfully,

T. F. RICHARDSON,
Assistant Surgeon.

Case of suspect sickness removed from steamship Jason at Tampico.

Temporary Acting Assistant Surgeon Lippincott, at Tampico, reports, August 13, as follows: The carpenter of steamship *Jason*, chartered by the Ward Line, of New York, was removed to the suspicious ward of the hospital, with temperature 38.2, one hour before the vessel sailed; case not diagnosed.

Report from Tampico—Inspection of vessels—Yellow fever spreading by river traffic—Suspect case on steamship Jason proved to be malarial.

Temporary Acting Assistant Surgeon Lippincott reports, August 15, as follows:

Week ended August 15, 1903.

Bills of health.....	6
Vessels inspected and passed.....	3
Vessels disinfected and passed.....	3
Personnel of crew.....	164
Passengers.....	3
Baggage (pieces).....	2

During the week there were 34 deaths from all causes, 14 of which were from yellow fever, 4 from tuberculosis, 1 from pernicious fever, 1 from puerperal fever, and 14 from noncontagious causes.

During the week there were 34 new cases of yellow fever officially reported, which, with 30 remaining from the previous week, make a total of 64 cases for the week ended August 15, 1903.

During the week yellow fever has been reported at Ciudad Victoria, capital of this State, where 4 cases and 1 death have occurred. By river the infection has extended to El Higo and Tamuin, points about 300 miles from Tampico. The captains of river boats have informed me that canoe men are found dead or dying in their boats all along the river banks from Tampico to these points.

The ship's carpenter removed from steamship *Jason* on the 14th proved to be ill with malarial fever and will be discharged from hospital to-day.

NICARAGUA.

Report from Bluefields, fruit port.

Acting Assistant Surgeon Goodman reports as follows: Week ended August 15, 1903. Present officially estimated population, 4,000; 1 death; prevailing diseases, malarial fever of a mild type. General sanitary condition of this port and the surrounding country during the week, good.

Bills of health were issued to the following-named vessels:

Date.	Name of vessel.	Number of crew.	Number of passengers from this port.	Number of passengers in transit.	Pieces of baggage disinfected.
Aug. 9	Geo. W. Kelley.....	19	0	0	0
13	Utstein.....	15	0	0	0